EDLD 5364:8035 Week 2 Reflections:

Dr. Mason’s video presentation did a very thorough job of introducing the topic of using a variety of technology strategies to provide diversified lessons to have a positive impact on all the students we touch in every class. The readings and videos introduced a variety of ways to accomplish painless pre-assessments and lesson individualization. I was especially excited by the resources at the CAST site which included instructional and information videos, a template for creating Universal Designs for Lessons, and many, many lesson resources and recommendations for accommodating most any learner for whom we might need to accommodate.

The reading topic I chose this week seemed to be at odds with what most of the class was discussing, but I feel that it was important to note that the information seemed contradictory to what we learned in the School Law Course. It seems teachers and districts will be held to higher student achievement standards in light of this new information. I was introduced to additional information about differentiating instruction through a webinar I attended courtesy of the Texas ASCD. I am quoting it below.

That said, school districts must emphasize the need for every teacher to provide the best possible differentiated curriculum experience within every class, but especially for his/her inclusion classes. In order to provide this new level of differentiated instruction, teachers must be exposed to not just literature that explains the process, but professional development that demonstrates best practices. The process takes time, according to Dr. Joseph Renzulli, as quoted in the CompassLearning White Paper on Differentiation,  
 “*True differentiation requires that we look at all the characteristics of the learner in addition to achievement level*.” It means that when, “*teachers differentiate curriculum, they stop acting as dispensers of knowledge and serve as organizers of learning opportunities*.” (p.1) In essence, teachers must adopt a classroom environment that moves away from the whole class doing exactly the same thing, in the same way, at the same time, to classrooms with learner-centric lesson centers that encourage learning of topics at differentiated levels in small similar groups; classrooms in which the teacher manages each group like an orchestra leader queuing his/her orchestra. The end result will be students better prepared for the newest iterations of high stakes testing because the process of differentiation is “ predicated on the simple belief that engaged, motivated students score higher and enjoy learning more.”

I was very fortunate that I received this updated information to bolster the articles we were assigned this week; although they were relevant, some of them were rather dated. They all increase my knowledge of a subject in which I need more information in order to more effectively assist my teachers become more proficient at choosing technology resources to best meet their students’ need.

References:

**Chapter One: Education in the Digital Age: The Challenge: Learner Diversity and HighStandards**an article retrieved from   
 [http://www.cast.org/teachingeverystudent/ideas/tes/chapter1\_2.cfm March8](http://www.cast.org/teachingeverystudent/ideas/tes/chapter1_2.cfm%20March8), 2012.

Reis, Sally and Renzulli, Joseph,(20ll). *CompassLearning White Paper on Differentiation*,CompassLearning, Inc., Austin, Tx, pp. 1 -16. Retrieved   
 from http://[www.compasslearning.com](http://www.compasslearning.com), March 9, 2012.